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# THEOLOGY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF FUNCTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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## THEOLOGY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF FUNCTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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"Functional psychology" is the designation given to the present tendency to treat consciousness from the biological standpoint, and with particular reference to its functions in the total life-process.<sup>1</sup> It is contrasted more or less sharply with "structural psychology," which undertakes an analysis of mental life in terms of its characteristic states and forms, without specific reference to their origin in the needs of the organism, or to their service in determining its adaptation to the environment.<sup>2</sup> The functional psychology is thoroughly evolutionary. As Professor James puts it: "Mind and world in short have been evolved together, and in consequence are something of a mutual fit."<sup>3</sup> And in the course of this evolution mental life has developed as the chief instrument in the process of adapting the psycho-physical organism to its physical and social environment. Our minds are therefore practical affairs, useful in satisfying the needs of our nature. "Mental life is primarily teleological; that is to say that our various ways of feeling and thinking have grown to be what they are because of their utility in shaping our *reactions* on the outer world."<sup>4</sup> Great importance, in this view, attaches to the genesis of the different forms of consciousness, and a general formula is offered concerning the origin of consciousness itself.<sup>5</sup> This placing of consciousness and all its "states" in a larger life-process deter-

<sup>1</sup> Angell, *Psychology*, pp. 6, 7, 64; James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Serviceable statements of the functional psychology will be found in the following articles: Angell, "The Relations of Psychology to Philosophy," *University of Chicago Decennial Publications*, pp. 5-8; Dewey, "The Reflex-Arc Concept in Psychology," *Psychological Review*, Vol. III, pp. 357-70. For the structural psychology see Titchener "The Postulates of a Structural Psychology," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. VII (1898), pp. 449-65.

<sup>3</sup> James, *Psychology, Briefer Course*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Angell, *Psychology*, p. 50.

mines the functional psychology to the use of dynamic, rather than static, conceptions. It maintains that the fundamental characteristic of the organism is activity. In the lowest forms of life there are spontaneity and internal co-ordination in the maintenance of adjustment to environment. The child, with a few reflexes and a great wealth of uncontrolled energy, is primarily a "behaving organism," as Professor James expresses it.<sup>6</sup> Certain forms of this behavior are native, and others acquired. There is in reality no mere passivity. In the course of its reflex and instinctive movements the organism is continually developing new "situations" and "problems," in reference to which constant adjustment is made. Abounding energy, issuing in impulsive movements, which bring in return a wealth of sense-impressions through hands, eyes, ears, and muscles, is the original possession of the child. These impressions lead in turn to modifications in the movements; and thus a circuit of reactions is maintained. The organization of his efforts in order to make his activity most effective, and to attain the fullest satisfaction of his various needs, is the one great concern, psychologically expressed, of the human being.

This explanation of the different phases of consciousness with reference to the concrete life-conditions which call them forth, and with reference to their service in the ultimate control of those conditions is extended over the whole scope of the mental life. Not only the mental activity of the savage and of the child has its value as a means of furthering their welfare, but also the abstract thinking of civilized man roots itself at last in practical needs, and is estimated by the degree to which it serves them. The "truth" of science and of metaphysics is tested at last by the success with which they aid the life-processes. Every hypothesis of science stands ready at any moment to submit to actual tests, and every system of philosophy in the last resort is judged by the results which follow from it. In this way functional psychology extends its claims over the whole domain of experience and philosophy. The problems of ethics are involved in the psychology of desire and volition, and it is only a matter of convenience that the field of ethics is separated from psychology. In the same way logic and æsthetics are elaborations of the psy-

<sup>6</sup> James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*, chap. 3.

chology of judgment and feeling. Metaphysics is granted a distinct field, in the same provisional and practical way, only as a means of specializing the problems for convenience in treatment. Any thorough handling of the psychological problems of cognition takes one straight into the midst of metaphysics without any break or leap. The philosophical sciences are all, in the words of Professor Angell, "organic developments of a common root and represent phases, or stages, in the solution of a single complex problem" — "the problem of the structure and function of consciousness." Accordingly, "when psychological study is interpreted in a functional, as well as a structural, sense, the theoretical distinctions between psychology and philosophy have ceased to exist."<sup>7</sup>

Theology stands in essentially the same relation to psychology. A thorough consideration of the concepts of theology, their origin, development, and significance for man's life, requires a psychological study of the religious consciousness. On the other hand, if one starts with the psychology of religion, and pursues it to the full extent, it is found to involve the recognition and investigation of the ultimate problems of theology. Any demarkation of the spheres of the psychology of religion and of theology is therefore just as arbitrary, and is to be held just as lightly, as that between psychology and metaphysics. If this relation is not so clear between psychology and theology as it is between psychology and other metaphysical sciences, it may be due to the present undeveloped state of the psychology of religion, and to the tendency of theology to cultivate its field in greater isolation from the influence of the natural sciences.<sup>8</sup> There are some results already at hand which indicate in a general way the significance of functional psychology in the domain of theology.

This psychology has fruitfully employed the genetic and historical method, by which developed forms of consciousness are investigated through their earlier stages, and, if possible, in their very beginnings. Pursuing this method, it is pertinent to inquire what place was held

<sup>7</sup> Angell, "The Relations of Psychology to Philosophy," *Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago*, Vol. III, pp. 20, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Of the works in the psychology of religion only Professor James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* indicates the import of such studies for theology. Investigations in this field have been limited mainly to the gathering and classification of material concerning certain phases of the religious history of individuals, particularly during the period of conversion.

in primitive religions by the intellectual processes which, in the developed forms of religion, have given rise to theology.

The study of the beginnings of the religious consciousness has greatly lessened the claims of the intellectualists as to the character, function, and importance of specific religious ideas. It is no longer claimed by the best authorities that all peoples possess a definite idea of God. Many primitive forms of religion, and others which have reached a high state of development, are quite without the conception of a personal deity. The Blackfellows of Australia,<sup>9</sup> for instance, do not get beyond spirit ancestors and other spirit individuals. Even these are involved in their explanation of practical needs. The absorbing interest with these races is the immediately practical and social character of their ceremonies and activities. The mainsprings of these ceremonies are the elemental life-interests—birth, youth, marriage, food, war, death. For instance, among the Malays of Malacca there are elaborate ceremonies accompanying the planting and harvesting of rice, hunting, fishing, and mining. The object is to make sure the results of such activities. In the totemism of the tribes of central Australia, where each group of people identifies its life and welfare with those of a certain class of animals or plants, the purpose of the ceremonies is to increase the number of the totemic animals or plants; and often this means provision for the food supply; but their performance of ceremony is not associated in the native mind with the idea of appealing to the assistance of any supernatural being.<sup>10</sup> The conception of "spirits" and of the supernatural, where it does arise, is therefore not fundamental in the development of religion, but is rather secondary and incidental.<sup>11</sup> "Mere animism can hardly be called primitive religion more than primitive science. It is simply a postulate from which to explain things, a principle of which one may take advantage in many practical problems."<sup>12</sup>

Further evidence that an exaggerated importance has been attached to reflection and conscious control of religious activities is

<sup>9</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 207.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>11</sup> Irving King, *The Differentiation of the Religious Consciousness*, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 38, 48; cf. Brinton, *Religion of Primitive Peoples*, p. 84.



found in the domination of imitation and custom. The force of social habits is tyrannical in the extreme, in spite of the fact that they are often due to the most trivial, accidental causes. Among the Malays "another tribe on undertaking to mine tin would imitate every detail in the method of those who first did it, even to such irrelevant details as those of language and dress."<sup>13</sup> It is the old fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, and is due not so much to incorrect thinking as to the influence of unreflective imitation. How far these customs are from being the expression of definite ideas is shown in the explanations given of them. Among the Australians the reason for performing the ceremonies as they do is that their ancestors did so. If any further explanations are sought, the inquiry appears to the natives ridiculous and incomprehensible.<sup>14</sup>

The priority of practical, social activities, and the secondary character of the ideas which later arise in explanation of them, are well illustrated in the field of æsthetics. "The dance before the chase or battle, the mimes at agricultural festivals or at initiation ceremonies, which seem to the uninstructed onlooker crude forms of art, are to the minds of the actors entirely serious. They give success in the real activities which follow these symbolic acts. They bring the rain or sunshine or returning spring."<sup>15</sup> Art is here the state or attitude of consciousness which is built up in these activities, and which results from them. This state may eventually be cultivated on its own account, and may be employed as a test of the artistic character of other activities; but the view that the dances or ceremonies arose in the first instance in order to give expression to the already existing art-consciousness, or art-ideas, is discarded. "Art has not arisen primarily to satisfy an already existing love of beauty. It has arisen chiefly, if not wholly, from other springs, and has itself created the sense by which it is enjoyed."<sup>16</sup> In the same way it may be said that the religious consciousness is built up in the course of certain activities performed by the social group with reference to needs which are often of a very material kind. Gradually this attitude is de-

<sup>13</sup> King, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 136 f.

<sup>15</sup> J. H. Tufts, "On the Genesis of the Æsthetic Categories," *The University of Chicago Decennial Publications*, Vol. III, Part 2, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

tached from the setting in which it arose, and becomes in turn a standard and test by which to determine whether other given experiences are religious or have religious value. This agrees also with the increasing evidence of the priority of ritual over moral or theoretical teaching.<sup>17</sup>

Direct confirmation of the source and character of the first stages of the religious consciousness is found in the experience of the child. His interest in religion is chiefly concerned with its forms and ceremonies. He is little interested in the meaning which older persons attach to them, and he participates in them either in the imitative spirit or with reference to the securing of his personal ends. His prayers are for the most part repetitions of words with scrupulous regard for the precise order in which they have been learned; or, where they are spontaneous, usually express petitions for the objects which he most craves. It is only in late adolescence that there comes to consciousness any deep questioning concerning the meaning and value of the religious exercises. And even then it is only in exceptional cases extended beyond the conventional, and it may be rather simple, forms of thought in the social group of which he is a part.<sup>18</sup>

The functional treatment of developed theological conceptions keeps in view their genesis and growth in actual experience, and tests their truth and value in terms of the control and guidance of conduct. Conceptions are shorthand symbols for summarizing and unifying experience. They involve images, sensuous and detailed, or schematic and symbolic. There is always imagery in the most abstract concept. The distinguishing feature of the conception, however, is the element of meaning, the expression of relations. Both constituents are subject to change. The images may be now visual, now auditory or again motor; and the meaning may gradually become larger, finer, and more ideal. This growth of conceptions is dependent upon experience, for they are at last just the registrations of experience. Every different use of an object involves a new mode of conceiving it. "There is no property absolutely essential to any one thing."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Henry Preserved Smith, *Old Testament History*, p. 68; William Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 16, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion*, chap. 15, especially p. 194.

<sup>19</sup> James, *Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 333.



The significance of this psychology of conception for all theological ideas may be illustrated in terms of the most fundamental and central conception, the conception of God. This idea is not innate. It arises with the power of generalizing and unifying experience, and under the practical demand for such generalization, in the maintenance and furtherance of practical interests. When the idea does appear it bears the impress of the social and material conditions of the community which formulates it, and with the growth of society the conception changes both as to its imagery and its meaning. Among the early Semites, for example, the thought of the deities was evidently determined by the natural conditions under which the people lived. Living water, whether from springs or running streams, formed the basis for community life by creating vegetation for food and trees for shelter. On this account the springs and rivers were sacred. The water was itself the deity or his abode. The land which it fertilized was holy ground, clearly distinguished by the growth of vegetation, and all things within the sacred precincts were guarded by tabus. When life was nomadic, and herds and flocks were the chief forms of wealth, the gods were often conceived as animals, such as the sacred bull or goat. When agriculture was cultivated, the natural elements which conditioned the growth of harvests determined the idea of the deities.

The growth of the idea of God reflects also the development of the social organization. Each tribe or social group had its own gods, expressing, and in turn strengthening, certain characteristic phases of its life. As the tribes enlarged and took on new activities, the deities evidenced corresponding growth. On the other hand, if a tribe was exterminated, or lost its identity, its god reverted to the lower condition of demons, whose chief characteristic was that they were without worshippers. The success of a particular group in conquest meant the subjugation of the conquered gods, and finally their extinction. Yahweh was originally the god of a single Semitic tribe. He gained power and significance with the leadership and conquest which his subjects were able to accomplish, so that in the end, with the organization of the nation, the ancient name of the deity was retained for the God of the whole people. This correspondence between the stage of social development and the nature of the gods is still further

illustrated by the significant fact that, when the mother was the head of the family, the deities were goddesses.<sup>20</sup> Later, when the father became the recognized head of the family, the deity became masculine, and took on the attributes and characteristics of paternal authority. Among the Hebrews, to whom has been ascribed an ethical monotheism derived in a unique, supernatural way, the development of monotheism was coincident with, and apparently dependent upon, the rise of the monarchy. The coalescence of smaller social groups into larger unities was reflected in the fusion of the gods themselves, until, in the attainment of the kingdom centering in the person of the king, the basis was laid for the idea of one God, which obviously was closely fashioned, though in heroic proportions, upon the model afforded by the earthly monarch. The heavenly king, like the earthly, gradually developed a court with angelic messengers and numerous cohorts ready at command to execute the sovereign will. Another stage was reached for the Hebrews during the exile. That great strain upon their social institutions and the enforced removal of many people from Jehovah's land magnified their sense of his distance from them and emphasized the idea of his transcendence. To the sensitive minds of the great prophets the contact with other peoples gave rise also to the conception of Jehovah as the God of all nations, though this idea was evidently born of patriotism and hope rather than of actual political supremacy. This feeling of the greatness and the transcendence of Jehovah, in connection with their national distress, resulted with the Hebrews, as it has with other peoples, in the need of mediation and in the hope of a savior. Their Messiah, under the stress of the national humiliation, took the form of a suffering servant. It is an impressive fact that the two typical Jewish conceptions of the redemptive work of Jehovah were the counterparts of two contrasted periods of the national life. One was projected from the background of the golden age of the monarchy under King David. As he put to silence his enemies and established a glorious kingdom, so God would some day, by another mighty one, deliver his people and make them supreme. The other view of divine deliverance was an expression of the humbled and chastened national spirit in the period of oppression and exile. Humility and

<sup>20</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, pp. 58 ff.

suffering innocence were its central elements. In the end, when his life was completed, the character and work of Jesus conformed best to the latter type, while his own experience and powerful personality added vividness and strength to the ethical, social conception of God as a loving Father.

In the same way the thought of God has been various and changing as it reflected the life of different peoples. The temper, culture, and social customs of the Greek, Roman, and Teutonic peoples have reacted vitally upon the Christian conception of God. The process still continues. The idea of God is now undergoing perhaps the profoundest transformation in history. The forces accomplishing it are not vagaries of speculative philosophy, but the tremendous influences of modern civilization. The change is from the transcendence to the immanence of God. It is due to the rise of democratic institutions and the birth of an intense social consciousness. The old notion of transcendence was the reflection of the monarchical form of government which has prevailed in all the great nations from antiquity to the modern era. The king or emperor was far above the people. He was surrounded by vast estates, by castle walls, and by large armies. He could be approached only through mediators and subordinates. His arbitrary will was law. His ways were full of secrecy and mystery. The corresponding characteristics of his subjects were implicit faith, unquestioning obedience. They sang his praises, and most humbly offered before him their gratitude and petitions. Could anything describe more exactly than such terms the conception of a transcendent God, and the relations men sustain to him? On the other hand, nothing could be farther from the spirit of democracy. In a democracy the chief concern with reference to the leader or ruler is not his lineage or inheritance, but his own personality and efficiency. His will is not arbitrary, but justifies itself in experience, and is held to the standard of law and consistency. The citizens feel themselves one with their leader. They share in the exercise of sovereignty, and in its responsibilities and dignity. The inmost reality and significance of the state is found in the individual citizens. They are mutually dependent, interrelated, and conditioned. In such a society the old conception of a transcendent God is out of place, just as much as is the idea of an auto-

cratic, arbitrary monarch. The great awakening of the masses of men in all nations to self-government through the exercise of intelligent self-control; the emancipation of slaves; the elevation of women; the humane care of the dependent, defective, and criminal members of society; the great constructive organizations of labor; efforts toward the purification of politics; popular education; various world's congresses for the promotion of science, art, and religion—all these are the expressions of a growing social consciousness, stronger, more enlightened, and more determined than mankind has ever before experienced, and they are also the causes and the justification of the conception of the immanence of God.

Such a statement of the evolution of the conception of God involves also the question of the truth and validity of that conception. Here the relation in which the functional psychology conceives itself to stand to metaphysics has the utmost importance. In this psychology the statement of the genesis and development of an idea carries its own indication of the truth or reality of the idea. The historical survey reveals the function of the idea and its value in experience. In so far as it aids and furthers experience, it is true. It is always relative, always conditioned. But just on this account is it real. Psychology does not then merely lead up to the boundary of metaphysics, at which point it is compelled to transfer its problem to a different kind of inquiry. Metaphysics is only the more detailed and persistent investigation of the psychology of conception. The theological problem is therefore radically changed. The question heretofore, from the standpoint of transcendence, has been: Does a supreme, absolutely perfect being exist? Is there an actual, objective reality corresponding to the subjective idea of God? No one has ever been able to produce any adequate answer to that question.

The question itself has fallen under suspicion. There is no criterion by which it can be judged. It is impossible to get outside of experience to investigate the assertion that something exists there. The attempts to do this, and the dogmatic insistence upon "faith" in such a transcendent existence, have been the most fruitful sources of skepticism. The implications of present knowledge may point to further related experience, but it is difficult to realize how they could

prove the existence, truth, or objective reality of anything beyond experience. The alleged "proofs" of the being of God give the impression of purely formal, abstract circles of reasoning. They were given up long ago by Kant on the ground of the impotence and futility of such "pure reason." He boldly declared the idea of God to be a "regulative" conception, justified by the practical way in which it served to unify and guide experience.

This did not mean for Kant, and it does not mean for modern pragmatism, that the idea of God is false and meaningless. It does involve, however, a different conception and criterion of "truth." In functional terms truth means value. The question, Is the idea of God true? means: Is the idea of God of value in actual experience? Does it serve to organize the highest interests of life, and to vitalize them with dynamic power in eliciting and controlling efficient reactions of the will? If the idea of God has these values and performs these functions, it is true. Without these, it is irrelevant and untrue. By the same criterion, that conception of God is truest which aids most in guiding, ennobling, comforting, and strengthening man in his devotion to moral ends. The idea of God in this view becomes the great "working hypothesis" of religion. It corresponds precisely to the hypothesis of natural science. It guides activity and is progressively modified by the results. That eminent pragmatist, Professor William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* has graphically described the process in these words<sup>21</sup>:

The deity to whom the prophets, seers, and devotees who founded the particular cult bore witness, was worth something to them personally. They could use him. He guided their imagination, warranted their hopes, and controlled their will; or else they required him, as a safeguard against the demon and a curber of other people's crimes. In any case they chose him for the value of the fruits he seemed to them to yield. So soon as the fruits began to seem quite worthless; so soon as they conflicted with indispensable human ideals, or thwarted too extensively other values; so soon as they appeared childish, contemptible, or immoral when reflected on, the deity grew discredited, and was ere long neglected and forgotten. When we cease to admire or approve what the definition of a deity implies, we end by deeming that deity incredible.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 29.

<sup>22</sup> In an article entitled "The Pragmatic Interpretation of the Christian Dogma," by Irving King, in the *Monist*, Vol. XV, pp. 248-61, the functional psychology is applied to the conception of the Holy Spirit, the Son of God, the second coming of Christ, and the inspiration of Scripture. He says: "Our concepts are only functionally valid and do not refer to ontological realities. All our realities are of the functional variety."



So far from being incompatible with Christianity, such a view finds many confirmations in the teaching of Jesus. He taught that what one is and does determines the truth for him. The pure in heart see God. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness attain the great satisfactions and insights of religion. He who "wills to do" is able to know. The summons of Jesus was to service—to a way of living. He himself was the example of religious faith, not because of his demonstration of the existence of a God, but because in the unfolding of his will there appeared the fullest exhibition of the meaning and power of his conception of God.

The same principles may be applied to all other theological conceptions. The place and function of various ideas are instructively presented in the history of Protestant denominations. Here religion confronts the individual in the form of certain doctrines. The prominence of creeds and the refinements of religious controversies have given religious bodies the appearance of being primarily intellectual movements. But it is becoming clear that such bodies took their rise in great practical issues, in support and defense of which they elaborated special theological systems. The creeds have been results rather than causes, and have come to their final formulation only when the circumstances out of which they sprang have become quiescent, and when the habits of the social group were becoming fixed and rigid. The great causes which produced the Reformation were moral, social, political, and commercial. The practical motives in Luther's work are well recognized. In the same way every reformer was possessed by some great humanitarian purpose. With Calvin it was the freeing and elevating of the individual. His efforts to emphasize the dignity and worth of man led him to exalt the principles of man's immediate relationship to God. It is God, and not the church, who orders the life of man. Hence no church or state has the right to assume to mediate between them. This spirit of independence has worked itself out in various forms—in congregational polity, and in political freedom advocated by many religious societies. The practical impulse is still more prominent in such bodies as the Methodist, the Salvation Army, and Christian Science.

In all communions changes in statements of doctrines are gradu-



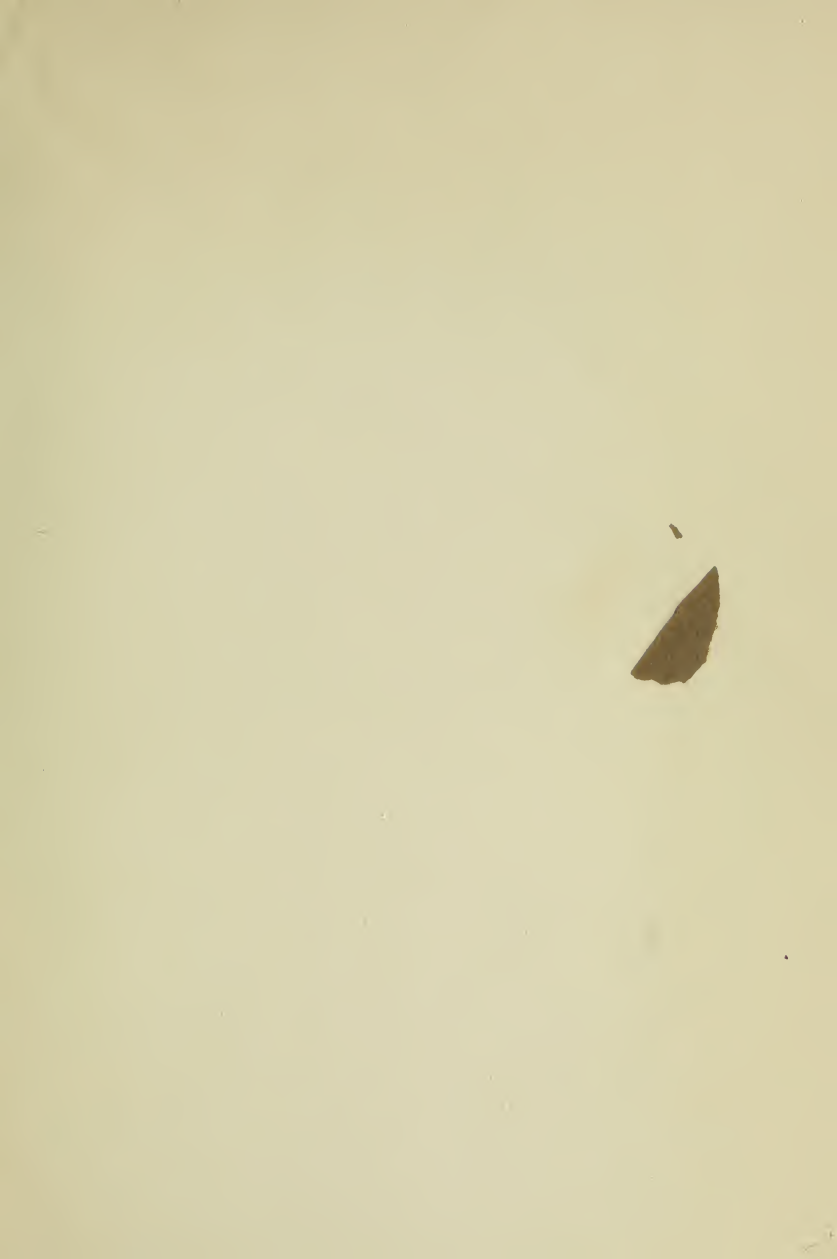
ally forced by the development of social conditions and the progress of culture. Within the short time since his day, the theological views of Jonathan Edwards have been outgrown by the devout New Englanders themselves. Even when, as in the early stages of a denomination, the problems are most acute, it is doubtful whether the intellectual views are conspicuous in the minds of many besides the clergy and a few official leaders.<sup>23</sup> The masses of every communion are held to it primarily by the practical values of religious living and by family traditions, social influence, and force of habit. Even doctrinal statements often have more practical than intellectual significance. For instance, the confession in terms of the creed may be as much an act of worship, or an emotional reaction, as an exercise of reason. These forms of worship and ordinances are also subject to social and cultural changes. They must be submitted to the final test of their influence and fruitfulness in the lives of those who employ them. If they further and enrich the spiritual nature, they establish themselves with increasing spontaneity, and their value is continually self-evidencing. But if they are maintained only by an appeal to authority, or to the precedent of earlier and very different religious experiences, then they show themselves in the process of becoming mere survivals and vestiges of past conditions.

The acceptance of the functional psychology means, then, for religion the recognition and justification of the gradual and continuous modifications of doctrines. It does not mean that these doctrines are inherently false, illusory, or useless.<sup>24</sup> Heretofore doctrinal changes have gone on either unconsciously, and therefore in a random way, or they have been opposed by the established habits of

<sup>23</sup> James H. Lueba, *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, Vol. I, p. 162.

<sup>24</sup> Neither does it mean that religious knowledge is to be sought through some unique experience. The suggestion of Professor James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 431, elaborated by Professor Starbuck, in support of the view that the feelings may furnish an avenue of religious knowledge, has not commended itself to many scholars. For instance, F. M. Davenport, in the discussion of the passional and rational in religion, says: "I would take straightforward issue with those who still hold that the subconscious, the imperfectly rational, the mystically emotional in spite of all its vagaries, is *par excellence* the channel of the inflow of divine life" (*Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, p. 279). E. D. Starbuck, "The Feelings and Their Place in Religion," *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, Vol. I, pp. 168 f.

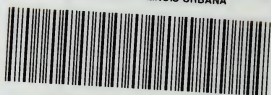
thought known as orthodoxy, often in blind prejudice and with tragic results. If, on the other hand, changes in theology were understood to be the marks of growing religious life and real aids in such growth, theology would come to take its place among the sciences. It would in that case surrender its claim to any unique authority, but it would gain the dignity and the working authority which the natural sciences now possess. These sciences do not claim any infallible knowledge or methods. Their conclusions have no finality. They are always subject to revision, and yet they are respected and employed in affairs of the greatest moment. Moreover these sciences possess the fundamentally important dispositions of inquiry, of investigation. Nothing is exempt from questioning. Doubt is in a true sense the instrument of scientific progress. But theology has labored under the assumption of infallible elements or sources, and therefore, at certain points, has felt compelled to raise the red flag against any critical inquiry. Nothing more characteristically indicates the difference between theology and science than the way in which the one has feared, and the other favored, free investigation. The psychology of religion bids fair to point the way to a less pretentious, but really greater, service to religion than theology has ever before been able to perform. Working in the spirit and with the methods of modern science, recognizing the tentative nature of its principles, and setting itself patiently but bravely to practical experiments, religion may yet hope to enter upon more secure and substantial progress, just as education and other forms of social activity have done.







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